

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jack McCarthy
617-722-8859

Statement of Inspector General Gregory Sullivan

We are pleased that the Department of Environmental Protection has acknowledged the flaws of its enhanced auto emissions program and – nearly two years after we first pointed out these problems – is finally doing something about it.

We applaud their decision to hold Agbar Technologies responsible for correcting the program and hope the \$15 million Agbar has committed to the process will produce the reliable testing program Massachusetts motorists deserve.

However, given the history of cover-up at the DEP, we won't believe the program is working properly until we see the results of an independent test of the upgraded system.

In addition, we continue to be concerned about the vehicle owners whose cars have needlessly failed the test. Our extensive research shows that since its inception almost five years ago, Massachusetts' enhanced automobile emissions program has failed approximately 150,000 cars that actually met the state's emissions standards – and would have passed a more reliable test.

That means some 150,000 Massachusetts motorists have paid as much as \$400 for unnecessary car repairs.

In Connecticut, Agbar recently agreed to reimburse some 3,000 motorists for the repairs triggered by false failures. Last week in Texas, Environmental Systems Product Holdings, Inc., one of Agbar's Massachusetts vendors, offered compensation to as many as 50,000 motorists who were victims of faulty emissions tests.

We call on DEP to design and administer an Agbar-funded rebate program that would reimburse motorists for their unnecessary car repairs. We would be happy to offer assistance in designing the refund program.